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RICHMOND
(YORKSHIRE)

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.



ANNUAL REPORT

— OF —

HOWELL WILLIAMS, ESQ., M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.



FOR YEAR ENDED
31ST DECEMBER, 1924.

RICHMOND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Area of District in acres	76,228
Population in Census 1921	9,251

*To the Chairman and Members of the Richmond Rural
District Council.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In conformity with the circular issued by the Ministry of Health dated 18th December, 1924, I have the honour to present to you my Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the district for the year ended the 31st December, 1924.

Vital Statistics.

There were 175 births registered, 97 of whom were males and 78 were females, giving a birth-rate of 19.27 per 1000, against 18.98 for the preceding year, 17.89 for 1922, and 19.82 for 1921. Nine births were illegitimate, giving an illegimate birthrate of 0.99.

The birth-rate for the whole of England and Wales was 18.8 per 1000.

The deaths of 117 persons at all ages and from all causes were registered, 58 of whom were males, and 59 were females, making a death-rate of 13.87 per 1000, against 10.58 for the preceding year 11.98 for 1922, and 12.28 for 1921.

The death-rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1924 was 12.2.

The infantile mortality measured by the proportion of deaths under one year of age to registered births was equal to 74 per 1000 against 90 for the preceding year.

The mortality for the whole of England and Wales among infants under one year of age to every 1000 births registered was 75 per 1000.

The death rate from respiratory diseases was, excluding pneumonia, 0.94 per 1000.

Seven deaths occurred from epidemic diseases viz :- Scarlet Fever 1, Whooping Cough 1, Influenza 5, equal to 0.82 per 1000.

Deaths per 1000 of population from certain classes of disease including violence :—

Heart Disease	...	...	...	1.43
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	0.82
Pneumonia	...	...	...	0.82
Cancer	...	...	...	1.54
Violence	...	...	...	0.35

The statistics are based on the estimate prepared by the Registrar General, and are taken from the 1921 census.

They differ somewhat from those supplied by the Local Registrar.

Table of mortality as regards age :—

Under one year of age	...	...	13
One and under two years	...	...	3
Two and under five years	...	...	5
Five and under fifteen years	...	...	3
Fifteen and under twenty-five years	...	...	5
Twenty-five and under forty-five years	...	...	11
Forty-five and under sixty-five years	..	...	22
Sixty-five years and upwards	...	...	55
Total			117

Seventeen per cent of the total deaths were under five years of age, and forty six per cent were upwards of sixty five years of age at the time of their decease.

Prevalence and control of Infectious Diseases.

Thirty three cases were notified under the Infectious Disease Notification Act, &c., viz:- Scarlet Fever 6 cases, Diphtheria 2 cases, Chicken Pox 14 cases, Puerperal Septicaemia 1 case, Pneumonia 6 cases, Poliomyelitis 1 case, and Erysipelas 1 case. The Diphtheria cases were removed to Hospital, and also three of the Scarlet Fever cases, all the others were treated at home. There was only one death among those notified viz:- Scarlet Fever, all the others made good recoveries.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Eight cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified, four of the number died. There were three other deaths from the disease, which occurred outside the district, and had not been notified.

Medical Practitioners are beginning to take advantage of the arrangements made by the County Council for the examination of the sputa, which I trust will facilitate early notification, so that patients might be sent to a sanatorium, in time for treatment to be more effective.

Influenza.

This disease was very prevalent in some parts of the district during the early part of the year, and although the great majority of the cases were of a mild type, five succumbed to the disease.

Small Pox Prevention Regulations, 1917.

It is satisfactory to be able to state that not a single case of Small Pox occurred during the year, so the M.O.H. did not take any steps in regard to vaccination, which was left entirely in the hands of the Public Vaccinator. The necessary steps were taken in nearly all instances to verify the reports received from the Head Teachers in regard to infectious diseases, and precautions were taken against the spread of the same, including the exclusion of children from School attendance.

Nursing Facilities.

I have nothing fresh to add to what I have stated in previous reports. More than half the district is still without a trained Nurse or any one competent to look after the sick. Of course those in a position to pay are able to get a Nurse from the Nursing Institutions, but in the case of the poor they are often dependent on their neighbours, or go without.

Schools.

The Schools are still without water for drinking purposes, although six of them are in villages that have a constant water supply. It is very necessary that every school, wherever possible, should be provided with wholesome water for drinking purposes. The following schools were closed during the year :- Caldwell for Scarlet Fever, for 14 days in February : Bolton for Influenza during the same month for 13 days : Catterick, Brompton and Skeeby for the same disease in March for 17, 14 and 7 days respectively : Marske for Chicken Pox in June, for 14 days : Catterick for Whooping Cough in July for three weeks : Brompton for the same disease in August and September for 14 days : Ravensworth for Whooping Cough in October and November, for three weeks.

School closure has been a controversial matter during the last fifty years, but more especially since 1910: no doubt school closure as a preventative measure against the spread of infectious diseases has only a limited effect in towns and populous districts, but it is very different in sparsely populated rural districts, where a great many children have to travel two or three miles to school, and some times even further. Be that as it may, the Ministry of Health have just issued a memorandum on the subject, according to which it will be no longer permissible to close a school on financial grounds ; if a school is closed it will have to be done solely in the interest of health.

As hitherto, the Sanitary Inspector disinfected houses on the recovery of the patients, or their removal to hospital; also all infected schools. There is not much reliance to be placed on ordinary fumigation; what is far more effective is thorough cleaning, including the washing of the paint, and distempering of the walls, failing which spraying the interior of the rooms with some potent disinfectant could be recommended.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

There has been no addition made in the water supply of the district since my last Annual Report, which is to be regretted, as there are several villages that would be much improved by a more adequate and a purer supply.

Pollution of Streams.

The drainage from the majority of the villages goes into small streams or becks; those who have a regular system of sewerage have either filtering or depositing tanks, with one exception where the sewage is treated by chemicals. A great many of the principal houses drain into cesspools; also nearly all that have W.Cs. in the absence of a proper system of sewerage do so. Although several of the villages have a constant water supply, the inhabitants are debarred from having W.C's in their houses unless they drain into cesspools. Owing to the absence of a regular system of sewerage, there is very little crude sewage entering the streams in any part of the district.

As stated in previous reports the district is in a great measure dependent on the dry or conservative system for the disposal of the excreta. Although improvements have been made in the privies, a large number of them are still far from satisfactory.

Drainage and Sewerage.

There was not much addition made in the drainage in any part of the district during the year, which is greatly to be deplored, as there are several villages that would be much improved by a good system of drainage, especially Melsonby and Brompton, the water supply being at present in danger of pollution at both places

House Drainage.

I have nothing fresh to add to what I have stated in previous reports in regard to house drainage. Without a regular system of drainage it is in many instances impossible to have a satisfactory drain when the house abuts on the road and the ground at the rear is on a higher level.

Scavenging.

There is no public system of Scavenging in any part of the district, so the work devolves either on the tenant or owner, with the result that accumulation of refuse matter is occasionally allowed to remain far too long in the neighbourhood of dwelling-houses, and is consequently a danger to health. The streets in the villages are kept fairly clean.

There are several workshops in the district including motor garages, builders', joiners', wheelwrights' etc. They are mostly in a small way, and in the hands of few persons. Three firms use motor power : all the shops have through ventilation. There are no bakehouses, or common lodging houses in the district, neither is there any offensive trade carried on.

Food.

There are ten slaughter houses in the district, the same number as last year : all are licensed and in a satisfactory condition. Every facility is allowed for the inspection of carcasses : no bad meat was brought under notice.

There are no regular retail sellers of milk in the district ; several farmers and others supply milk to those who go for it, but it is not delivered from house to house. Some of the farmers send milk to Stockton, Darlington, Middlesborough, &c.

The cowsheds and dairies belonging to those who sell milk wholesale have been visited and found fairly satisfactory.

There has been a complaint made against a certain farmer for selling dirty milk; a sample was sent up to London, and was proved on analysis to contain a large amount of bacteria. It is easy enough to remove all dirt visible to the naked eye by straining through several layers of muslin, but that does not get rid of the bacteria, which is the important thing.

Pure milk free from bacteria keeps for three or four days, so it is of paramount importance that every care is taken to prevent it being in any way contaminated. For that purpose, and to ensure the milk being perfectly clean the following Rules should be adhered to :—

- 1.—The dairy should be kept perfectly clean, limewashed every four months and well ventilated.
- 2.—The byre should be thoroughly cleaned every day, and the channel swilled before milking: when the milking is over fresh bedding should be put down.
- 3.—The cows should be groomed, fed, and the udders washed with tepid water, and wiped dry with a soft towel before milking.
- 4.—The milkers should wear clean overalls, and white linen caps: they should also wash their hands in warm water before milking.
- 5.—Covered cans should be used, and the milk properly cooled as soon as possible after milking.
- 6.—The cans should be thoroughly scalded or preferably steamed directly they are emptied.

7.—No one should have anything to do with milk who has any sores on the hands, or spots anywhere about the body.

8.—Great care should be taken to keep the milking stools clean.

Housing.

Only eight new houses were erected last year, so there is still great scarcity of houses in many parts of the district.

In former reports I stated that I had inspected the whole of the district with a view of ascertaining the number of houses that were unfit for human habitation ; also the number that were not in all respects fit for human habitation, in other words below a reasonable standard, but so far not much has been done to carry out my recommendations.

Bedroom Accommodation.

From what I have stated, and the fact that the population has increased of late years it follows that bedroom accommodation is getting very scarce.

Eleven statutory notices were served during the year, which were carried out satisfactorily.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. WILLIAMS, M.D.

